

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

FRIDAY MORNING MAY 17, 1907.

WELLMAN AND THE POLE.

Wellman the adventurous Chicago news paper man who has been commissioned to find the north pole, is making vigorous and determined efforts to take his flight early in August. His airship is a huge one, the balloon being over 183 feet in length and nearly 53 feet in diameter. It has a lifting force of 19,515 pounds, or nearly ten tons. It will be propelled by a gasoline engine of some 70 horsepower, and it is hoped to make a speed of 15 to 18 miles an hour. The distance from Spitzbergen to the pole is in round figures 500 miles, and with the best of good luck might be made in 30 hours and the round trip in two and a half days.

From this it will be seen that if the best hopes of the adventurous voyager are realized the solution of the great polar mystery may be very speedily reached. Once Wellman has set sail, or mounted into the air and made his departure for the north, the world may not have long to wait for "piper's news" from the farthest north. Or mayhap, we may never hear again, except by wireless telegraphy from the hardy travellers. There fate may be that of Franklin and Andre, to put on immortality in the white solitude and eternal winter of the polar regions.

But as far as human prescience and preparation are capable of averting disaster great precautions are being taken. There will be an ever diminishing weight of the load carried, and so it is believed the airship can be kept afloat in the air from twenty-five to thirty days, ten times the length of time required to make the trip if all should go well. Four or five men will make up the crew. A dozen Siberian dogs and sleds will be taken along, so that in case of accident to the air-ship the return trip may be made over the ice. A ton and a half of provisions will be in store, sufficient to enable the party to maintain themselves through the winter, should the worst come to the worst. The three and a half tons of gasoline provided will be enough to give the air-ship a radius of two thousand miles, or nearly double the distance to the pole from Spitzbergen and return.

The prime danger is a break-down of the machinery, with storms and adverse winds. In fact the trip is as perilous as it is adventurous. All will hope that the success, so richly deserved, may be achieved. Wellman's present plans are to arrive in Spitzbergen in June, set up his airship which will be transported thither by steamer, and to spend July in making a series of trial trips, preparatory to the final northward voyage in August. All the civilized world will be eager spectators, so far as the telegraph can give them vision, of the boldest and one of the most interesting voyages yet undertaken by man and a land acclimat and enduring fame await the arctic explorer should he succeed in reaching the pole.

Manitoba farmers are delighted with the sharp advance in the price of wheat. There are said to be 20,000,000 bushels of last year's crop in the Canadian West. But the advance seems to be purely speculative and not likely to be maintained.

Dr. Quigley, the lecturer of last evening, and Manager R. O'Brien of the St. John Globe, paid The Guardian a pleasant call yesterday afternoon. This is the first visit of both these gentlemen to Charlottetown. They warmly express their

admiration for the Island capital, which they find to be a much larger, more substantial and more beautiful city than they had expected to see.

The Liberal Eastern Chronicle "speaks right out in meeting" upon a report of a newspaper interview in London with Miss Borden, daughter of Sir Frederic Borden. Miss Borden expressed her love for London and added: "I admire, too the great free masonry among your exclusive circles, for we in Canada are getting our exclusive circles. Exclusiveness seems to be a product of increasing age." This is too much for the Chronicle and it breaks out: "Time and again have we been disgusted with reading that half a dozen women, (more or less) accompanied a Minister in his private car, being brought along at the expense of the public treasury. When some Ministers go anywhere in particular, the number of women attached to their household looks as if they travelled with a harem."

It turns out that a very large proportion of the alarming railway accidents in both the United States and Canada is due to broken rails. The great increase in the weight of locomotives and cars in recent years has been followed by the laying down of much heavier rails and stronger bridges. But the heavier rails are constantly breaking, showing that they are made of poor material. The demand for heavy steel rails has become so great, owing to rapid extensions of new railways, the relaying of old tracks and the laying down of new double tracks that rails are turned out very hurriedly to meet the enormous demand. There is a growing conviction that something must be done, either by Government inspection and testing of rails or in some other way to meet this appalling danger. We are accustomed to think of the perils of the sea, but travel by the great Atlantic liners is very safe compared with the dangers which in these days beset those who travel by rail.

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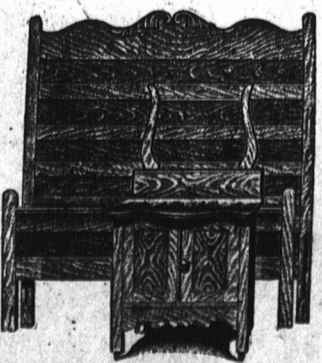
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